

Los Angeles; they put a foreign national behind bars for 78 months for participating in the transport of over 9,000 illegal aliens to and from Los Angeles; and they obtained a conviction and 16-year prison sentence against the founder of a domestic terrorist group that was planning attacks on U.S. military operations.

All of those prosecutions have occurred in the last 13 months alone.

André Birotte is a highly qualified individual who has been nominated not to lead an office embroiled in the politics of Washington, but instead that bears responsibility for investigating, prosecuting, deterring, and preventing Federal crimes against Americans and their families.

I do not believe the leadership of this office should get caught up in an unrelated dispute. If someone objects to Mr. Birotte, I hope they will come forward. Otherwise, I hope that we can move forward quickly to confirm this nominee.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume legislative session.

CALLING FOR A RENEWED FOCUS ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN'S VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 415.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 415) calling for a renewed focus on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran's violations of internationally-recognized human rights as found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, today I rise to express support for the people whose voices have been silenced by the Government of Iran. For 8 months, violence has been waged against peaceful protesters. Free speech, free expression, and a free press have been suppressed, and access to information and news has been limited through the jamming of international broadcasting and restrictions on the Internet.

According to a joint statement released by the United States and the EU on Monday, since the flawed Iranian election in June, there have been large scale detentions and mass trials of peaceful demonstrators; threatened executions of protestors; intimidation of family members of those detained; and the continued denial of peaceful expression, contrary to universal norms of human rights.

This statement was issued in advance of today's protests in Iran marking the

31st anniversary of the Islamic revolution, in anticipation of widespread violence and additional arrests which are occurring as we speak. These and other events in Iran represent blatant violations of international standards for human rights. This is why I have come to the floor today—to condemn the repression of the Iranian people, and to call on the government of Iran to bring its unconscionable behavior to an end.

On December 23, the Senate unanimously passed a resolution condemning the government of Iran for ongoing human rights abuses and for suppressing freedom of speech, assembly, expression, and the press. This resolution, which I introduced along with Senators LIEBERMAN, MCCAIN, and others, reiterated the concerns that we also conveyed in the Victims of Iranian Censorship, or VOICE Act, which authorized funding for the development of technology to circumvent online censorship in Iran.

Despite these and other international expressions of solidarity with the Iranian people, the government of Iran has become even more brutal in recent weeks. In a statement released on January 24, Human Rights Watch called the situation in Iran a "human rights disaster." Protestors are not the only group which has been targeted. The Iranian authorities have also launched an aggressive campaign against the press.

On Monday, Iranian state media reported the arrest of seven individuals charged with espionage for alleged ties to the U.S.-funded Farsi-language radio station, Radio Farda. These allegations and arrests coincide with a large-scale crackdown on independent media that has intensified in the past week. In the lead-up to today's demonstrations, Radio Farda broadcasts have been jammed, and there have been widespread service disruptions to the Internet and text message services. These and other government efforts have impeded the free flow of information, news, and basic means of communication.

This is why I will join Senator CASEY and others in introducing another resolution denouncing the atmosphere of impunity in Iran for those who employ intimidation, harassment, or violence to restrict basic freedoms of speech, expression, assembly, and the press. I am also proud to co-sponsor legislation introduced today by Senators MCCAIN, LIEBERMAN, CASEY, BAYH, DURBIN, GILLIBRAND, KYL, COLLINS, GRAHAM, and BROWNBACK which gives the President the ability to impose—at his discretion—sanctions against those Iranians who have committed human rights abuses or acts of violence against civilians engaged in peaceful political activity.

Unfortunately, the grave and deteriorating human rights situation is not the only concern of the international community with regard to Iran. In a speech earlier today, the Iranian president declared Iran a "nuclear state"

due to its ongoing enrichment program. The UN has spoken in one voice—on three separate occasions—repudiating Iran's ongoing enrichment of nuclear material in violation of its international obligations.

As the United Nations considers a fourth round of sanctions against Iran, the United States has imposed a new round of unilateral sanctions. Just yesterday, Treasury announced sanctions targeting the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or IRGC, for its involvement in spearheading Iran's nuclear and missile programs. As the IRGC continues to consolidate control over the Iranian economy, including the telecommunications sector, it is crucial to ensure that the Government of Iran is held to account for its ongoing violations of international law and activities which have made it a growing threat to global security.

The people taking to the streets in Iran are some of the most courageous in the world, and Congress will continue to reiterate its support for their right to have their voices heard. We will not sit idly by as the Government of Iran continues to deny its people essential freedoms and human rights, and we will put the Iranian Government—or any government which aims to silence its people—on notice that its behavior is unacceptable to the United States.

As President Obama stated in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech:

We will bear witness to the quiet dignity of reformers . . . to the hundreds of thousands who have marched silently through the streets of Iran. It is telling that the leaders of these governments fear the aspirations of their own people more than the power of any other nation. And it is the responsibility of all free people and free nations to make clear to these movements that hope and history are on their side.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, first, I thank my friend, the Senator from Delaware, for his strong statement. I thank him for his support of freedom and democracy in Iran. I thank him for his longtime advocacy of human rights. I and others are pleased to have the opportunity to work with him in a common cause of human rights and democracy. I thank the Senator from Delaware.

Mr. KAUFMAN. I thank the Senator.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have a colloquy with the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. LIEBERMAN, and I am aware of the time constraints of being in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today is the 31st anniversary of the Islamic Republic. Unfortunately, it is a record that many would rather forget—31 years of economic potential lost, stolen by a corrupt elite. We know what has gone on over the last 31 years.

Right now, as we speak, if anyone watching wants to turn on cable news,